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General Assembly

*Official Records*

Disarmament Commission

**350**th meeting

Wednesday, 8 April 2015, 3 p.m.

New York

*Chair*: Mr. Seck ..... (Senegal)

*The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.*

**Election of other officers** (*continued*)

**The Chair**: The Secretariat has been notified that the Group of Asian and Pacific States has nominated Mr. Sarmad Muwafaq Mohammed Al-Taie, Counsellor at the Permanent Mission of Iraq to the United Nations, for Vice-Chair of the Commission.

If I hear no comment, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to elect by acclamation Mr. Sarmad Muwafaq Mohammed Al-Taie of the Republic of Iraq as Vice-Chair of the Commission at its 2015 substantive session.

*It was so decided.*

**The Chair**: I congratulate Mr. Al-Taie on his election.

**General debate** (*continued*)

**Mr. Hasan** (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of Arab States. The Arab Group also aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/CN.10/PV.348).

At the outset, I would like to express our sincere congratulations to you, Mr. Chairman, on your election to chair the United Nations Disarmament Commission for 2015. We also wish to congratulate the members of the Bureau and the Chairs of the Working Groups. We wish them every success in reaching an outcome that responds to all concerns of the Member States.

The Arab Group emphasizes that the multilateral framework, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, is the only sustainable method with which to address questions of disarmament and international security. The Arab Group also emphasizes the important role played by the United Nations Disarmament Commission as the only deliberative body dedicated to making recommendations concerning disarmament issues. However, the Group expresses its concern that the Commission has been deadlocked for the past 15 years. Accordingly, in order to achieve a consensus on the agenda items the Commission is to address at its current session, an agreement on specific recommendations concerning those items would be a very important step towards improving the Commission's effectiveness.

The Arab Group reiterates the need for all Member States to exhibit serious political resolve, especially concerning issues of nuclear disarmament, so that the Commission can successfully carry out its mandated tasks and accomplish its desired objectives. In that context, concerning agenda item 1, the starting point should be the implementation of article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the resolutions adopted in the context of the NPT Review Conferences. The Arab Group reiterates that General Assembly resolution 69/58, adopted on 2 December 2014, regarding the follow-up to the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament in 2015, serves as a road map for complete

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nuclear disarmament within a specific time frame and in the context of a comprehensive treaty or convention on nuclear weapons. The elements of a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons must be foremost among the issues to be addressed under agenda item 1.

The Arab Group reiterates its view that nuclear disarmament should be the ultimate priority, as reaffirmed at the tenth special session of the General Assembly in 1978, which was the first special session on disarmament. The Arab Group is deeply concerned that this commitment has not been adequately and sufficiently reflected in the working of the multilateral disarmament mechanism. It welcomes the increased international attention to the humanitarian effects of nuclear weapons and commends the results of those efforts, including the convening of the conferences held in Oslo, Nayarit, Mexico, and Vienna. We reaffirm that the time has come to begin negotiations in the context of the Disarmament Conference in order to reach a comprehensive convention on the prohibition of the development, testing, production, stockpiling, transfer, use and threat of use of nuclear weapons and on their elimination.

We reaffirm that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones can serve as a principal and effective step towards creating a nuclear-weapon-free world. In that context, the Arab Group reiterates that the creation in the Middle East of a zone also free of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction is one of its highest priorities. The international community has also acknowledged the need for such a zone.

The critical timing of the current session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission, preceding the upcoming 2015 NPT Review Conference, offers an important opportunity to reaffirm the international community's support for creating a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. The Arab Group closely follows developments in that regard and reaffirms the need to effectively implement resolution 50/66 of 1995, on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East, and the Action Plan adopted at the 2010 NPT Review Conference for the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. The failure to implement those commitments is a violation of the international non-proliferation regime.

The Arab Group reaffirms that confidence- and security-building measures in the field of conventional weapons must be based on respect for the principles of the Charter and the legitimate rights of States to self-defence, the preservation of regional safety and security, respect for the right to self-determination of people under foreign occupation, the inadmissibility of the occupation of the lands of other peoples, and respect for the right to produce, export, import and transfer conventional weapons. States that export weapons bear a special responsibility, and a balance must be struck between the responsibilities of States that export and those that import conventional weapons.

In conclusion, in order to ensure the success of this session and resolve the current deadlock in the Commission, the Arab Group will work to contribute positively and constructively to the deliberations and consultations to be conducted over the next few days.

**Mr. Tsymbaliuk** (Ukraine): On behalf of the delegation of Ukraine, Sir, I would like to congratulate you and all the other members of the Bureau on your election.

We look forward to continuing our discussion on recommendations for achieving the objectives of nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, as well as on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons.

Ukraine regards the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime and is a comprehensive supporter of its effective implementation, strengthening and universalization. Twenty-one years ago, on 14 January 1994 in Moscow, the then Presidents of Ukraine, the United States of America and the Russian Federation signed a trilateral statement outlining arrangements for the practical realization of Ukraine's decision to renounce nuclear weapons and become a non-nuclear-weapon State.

Twenty years later, the anniversary of that decision took place against a background of the Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine, represented by its occupation and annexation of Ukraine's territory in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and its destabilization of the situation in Ukraine's south-eastern regions. Those actions constitute a grave violation of the norms of international law, the Charter of the United Nations, the Helsinki Final Act and a number of bilateral and multilateral agreements

guaranteeing Ukraine's territorial integrity, the inviolability of its borders and non-interference in its domestic affairs.

The cynicism of those actions is particularly stark considering that they were committed by a State guarantor of Ukraine's territorial integrity and political independence under the Memorandum on Security Assurances in connection with Ukraine's accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, signed in Budapest on 5 December 1994. In particular, the State signatories to the Memorandum reaffirmed their obligation to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of Ukraine, and stated that none of their weapons would ever be used against Ukraine except in self-defence or otherwise in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

We feel we should emphasize that the Memorandum was signed in connection with Ukraine's adherence to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as a non-nuclear-weapon State and in accordance with its commitment to eliminating all nuclear weapons from its territory within a specified period of time. Ukraine fully met those commitments. Since the provisions of the Budapest Memorandum have been totally ignored and brutally violated by the Russian Federation, one of its State signatories, we urge the Disarmament Commission to develop and conclude a multilateral, legally binding instrument designed to provide security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States on the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

While emphasizing the importance of implementing the decisions of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, Ukraine would also like to affirm its support for the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. We consider convening a conference on the issue to be a priority task whose successful implementation will increase regional and international security and strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime. In that context, we also encourage the universalization of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), in the belief that its entry into force would constitute a definite step forward in our efforts to attain the noble objective of a safe and peaceful world free of nuclear weapons. It is extremely important that the integrity of the norms established in the CTBT be respected. With no disrespect to the importance of the ongoing voluntary moratoriums on nuclear weapon tests, which are highly valuable, they are no substitute for a binding global ban. In that regard, we call on the relevant Member States to ratify the CTBT as soon as possible.

Ukraine continues to support the development of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards system, and calls on all parties to the NPT that have not yet done so to conclude and fully implement comprehensive IAEA safeguards agreements and additional protocols. We condemn recent statements by Russian officials claiming that they have the right to deploy nuclear weapons on the territory of temporarily occupied Crimea. Such action clearly infringes Ukraine's non-nuclear status and violates Russia's obligations under the NPT. Moreover, the Ukrainian nuclear facilities, installations and materials located in Crimea have been seized by the Russians, in contravention of the IAEA Statute.

The actions of the Russian Federation, as a nuclear State, pose a direct threat to the international regime established by the NPT to which Ukraine adheres as a State that does not possess nuclear weapons. I should also mention that the Russian side's continued lack of progress in implementing the Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty is an obstacle to the nuclear disarmament process. We also continue to insist that negotiating and concluding a fissile material cut-off treaty is essential both to limiting nuclear proliferation and advancing nuclear disarmament.

My country has been a long-standing responsible participant in pan-European, subregional and complementary bilateral confidence-building mechanisms in the area of arms control, such as the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE), the Treaty on Open Skies and the Vienna Document of the Negotiations on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures, as well as separate bilateral agreements with our neighbours Poland, Hungary, Slovakia and Belarus. On 10 March 2014 we signed an agreement on bilateral confidence- and security-building measures with Romania. Regrettably, our numerous proposals to enter into similar agreements with Russia have been rejected by the Russian side on the pretext of the existence of a strategic partnership between our countries. Russia has consistently misinterpreted international law through its so-called suspension of its implementation of the CFE Treaty, an attitude that is hindering negotiations on conventional weapons controls in Europe. It is also

a clear sign of Russia's insincere intentions, aimed at gaining unilateral benefits, and of its unwillingness to comply with its international obligations.

We share the dissatisfaction with the ongoing impasse over conventional arms control in Europe, for which Russia's leadership is to blame, as well as with the slowdown in the Vienna Document's improvement of confidence- and security-building measures. As the Commission is aware, during its 2013 chairship of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), my country initiated discussions of the role that conventional arms control and confidence- and security-building measures can play in security architecture today and in the future. The salient idea and main goal of our long-standing initiative are the creation of a future-oriented strategic discussion of the subject that does not prejudge the outcome. While the discussions have not yet provided a firm indication of what the next concrete steps should be, Ukraine's initiative has been a timely one and has already found support, particularly from the OSCE chairship.

**Mr. Manongi** (United Republic of Tanzania): Mr. Chair, I would like to join the speakers before me in congratulating you and the other Bureau members on your well-deserved election. You can count on our support and cooperation.

We also wish to associate ourselves with the statement delivered by the Permanent Representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/CN.10/PV.348). In addition, I would like to make the following remarks in my national capacity.

First, we wish to reiterate our firm belief in multilateral diplomacy, which is critical to our collective endeavour to address the myriad challenges in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. We believe that it is important to ensure that the Disarmament Commission, as the sole specialized deliberative body within the United Nations multilateral disarmament machinery, agrees on a set of concrete recommendations on the issues on its agenda. We note with concern that the Commission has not submitted any substantive recommendations to the General Assembly in the course of the past 15 years. We therefore wish to underscore the need for the Commission to achieve concrete results in the 2015-2017 cycle. It is incumbent upon us all to demonstrate the necessary flexibility towards this end.

Secondly, we wish to underscore the importance of achieving total, irreversible and verifiable disarmament of nuclear weapons. Any use of nuclear weapons would have catastrophic humanitarian and environmental consequences. As affirmed by the International Court of Justice, such use would also violate the Charter of the United Nations and constitute a crime against humanity. The likelihood of a nuclear catastrophe cannot be ruled out as long as some countries retain and modernize their nuclear arsenals and postures, which intrinsically provide an excuse for others to seek them. The only guarantee that they will not be used is their total elimination. We hope that 26 September, a day designated as the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, will be used, inter alia, to raise awareness about the dangers of nuclear weapons. We also believe that the United Nations high-level international conference on nuclear disarmament will provide States Members of the United Nations an opportunity to assess the state of nuclear disarmament and make the necessary recommendations for achieving a nuclear-free world.

In the same vein, we support the call for the Conference on Disarmament to urgently commence negotiations on a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons. We call for full adherence to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and underscore the importance of the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in all regions of the world as a step towards nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Pending their elimination, we urge all nuclear-weapon States to provide unconditional and legally binding security assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under all circumstances, including in the context of the nuclear-weapon-free zone instruments.

Likewise, we wish to stress that disarmament efforts must not inhibit the inalienable right of developing countries to develop research, produce and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. We note in this regard the important role played by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in implementing the safeguards for the verification of nuclear programmes for peaceful purposes. We note that full submission by all non-nuclear-weapon States to IAEA safeguards will be an important confidence builder and a great accomplishment of the Treaty.

Thirdly and finally, we remain gravely concerned about the illicit trade, transfer, manufacture, possession and circulation of small arms and light weapons and their munitions, as well as their excessive accumulation

and uncontrolled spread in many regions of the world. The proliferation and illicit trade of arms, and their unauthorized use by non-State actors, fuel and prolong conflicts, environmental crimes, organized crime, including drug trafficking, and violent crimes such as terrorism. In this regard, we remain fully committed to effective multilateral efforts aimed at combating illicit trade in and proliferation of conventional weapons and their munitions. We welcome the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty, which we signed on 3 June 2013.

**Mr. Al-Juhaishi** (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, my delegation is pleased to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, on your election as Chair of the Disarmament Commission at its current session. We are convinced that, thanks to your experience and wisdom, the work of this session be very successful and we will be able to reach a positive and constructive outcome that will meet the expectations of Member States and allow us to overcome the various obstacles we face.

We align ourselves with the statement delivered just now by the representative of Bahrain on behalf of the Group of Arab States and the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/CN.10/PV.348). I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate Ambassador Kairat Abdrakhmanov, Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan, on his appointment as Chair of Working Group I and Mr. Bouchaib El Oumni of Morocco on his appointment as Chair of Working Group II.

Iraq reiterates the importance of the role played by the Chair of the Disarmament Commission, the multilateral deliberative organ examining issues of disarmament within the United Nations. This session, which is taking place in the first year of the three-year cycle, is particularly important because the international community is facing many challenges. We are witnessing the exacerbation of regional crises and terrorist threats. We are moving towards the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which will be held in April. Untiring efforts on the part of the international community and Member States are needed to garner the robust political will necessary to achieve our objectives, namely, the total elimination of nuclear weapons and all weapons of mass destruction and the establishment of a comprehensive system to address the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons and prevent the export of those kinds of arms to conflict areas.

Nuclear-weapon-free zones are a key tool for disarmament. The zones help us to achieve our ultimate goal, which is the consolidation of regional peace and security, and they can also contribute to international peace and security. Furthermore, they are important for confidence-building at the regional level and are a complementary tool to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Pursuant to article VII of the NPT, any regional group can draw up a regional treaty to ensure the complete elimination of nuclear weapons in their various territories. That provision is also contained in the outcome document of the 1995 NPT Review Conference on the principles and goals of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

The Middle East region is of central strategic importance politically and economically for the whole world. In order to bring about peace and stability in the region, we must implement effective measures to eliminate weapons of mass destruction and above all nuclear weapons and work to implement relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 487 (1981) and paragraph 14 of resolution 687 (1991), as well as the relevant General Assembly resolutions adopted by consensus on a yearly basis.

We reaffirm the importance of implementing the decisions taken at the NPT Review Conferences, in particular the Final Document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, which called for the convening of an international conference in 2012 to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, with the participation of all countries of the region. We also underscore the importance of implementing the resolution adopted at the 1995 NPT Review Conference, which would enable us to achieve the goals we have established.

Iraq reaffirms that the Conference on Disarmament is the only multilateral forum on disarmament. The Conference has a record of success, but it is at a critical juncture. For 18 years, the Conference has been unable to play its negotiating role with regard to the disarmament treaties because of its failure to agree on a programme of work. It is therefore essential to step up our efforts to develop a comprehensive and balanced programme of work to meet the concerns of Member States, in accordance with the rules of procedure. We need to make progress on the issues that we are

examining. We hope that Member States will be able to agree on a programme of work for the 2015 NPT Review Conference in order to achieve our goals in the area of disarmament. We must take advantage of the impetus and successes that we have seen at the international level.

I would like to take this opportunity to inform the Commission of the efforts undertaken by the Iraqi presidency of the Conference on Disarmament in 2013. We adopted a two-tiered approach to save the Conference from inertia, break the impasse and ensure that it resumed its technical and substantive work, according to its rules of procedure. We therefore adopted resolution CD/1956.Rev.1, on 16 August 2013, providing for the establishment of an informal working group to produce a programme of work for the Conference.

We also welcome General Assembly resolution 69/77, adopted by the First Committee by consensus, which welcomes the work of the Disarmament Commission as the disarmament mechanism of the United Nations and stresses the importance of strengthening dialogue and cooperation with the Disarmament Conference and the First Committee in order to revitalize the Commission's work. We should also focus our discussions on the items on the Disarmament Commission's agenda.

Nevertheless, we regret the fact that the Disarmament Commission was not able to achieve its objectives at its last session. We hope the Commission will carry out its role and agree on a programme of work and make recommendations to achieve its goal, which is the reason it was established. We commend the adoption of resolution 69/58, entitled "Follow-up to the 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament", and we also welcome the holding of the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons.

With regard to agenda item 1, "Nuclear disarmament", Iraq reaffirms that nuclear weapons have been and still are one of the greatest risks threatening the survival of the human race. The catastrophic and destructive effects of these weapons are innumerable and destroy human life. Therefore, we call for the implementation of the five-point plan proposed by the Secretary-General to the Disarmament Commission in 2008 and the implementation of 13 practical steps towards nuclear disarmament agreed at the sixth NPT Review Conference, held in 2000. We should also respect the multilateral nature of the process and the other principles agreed to as part of the various international treaties. Iraq believes that the only way to guarantee complete nuclear disarmament is through the full implementation of the NPT and its universalization. Nuclear disarmament should be one of our priorities to ensure a secure environment for us and future generations.

We also welcome the impetus given to the international debate on the humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons. Iraq actively participated in the three Conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons held in Oslo, Nayarit, Mexico, and Vienna. The delegation of Iraq would like to express its support for the pledge made by the Government of Austria to follow the imperative of human security for all and to promote the protection of civilians against risks stemming from nuclear weapons, and its call on States parties to renew their commitment to the urgent and full implementation of the NPT.

With regard to the agenda item on confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons, the international community knows that conventional weapons are a new threat, the effects of which are similar to those of nuclear weapons. We must take a firm position in order to implement the relevant international decisions to fight against those kinds of weapons, which clearly have disastrous effects. Conventional weapons prevent the development of communities and play an important and dangerous role in armed conflicts. They are a source of concern for many countries and can easily fall into the hands of terrorist groups because of weak export controls on those kinds of arms and the lack of international standards regulating the issue of small arms and light weapons.

We would also like to highlight the efforts of the Government of Iraq to promote relevant treaties and conventions in that regard. In September 2014, on the margins of the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly, Iraq acceded to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects and its five additional Protocols. In the same context, the delegation of Iraq was pleased to welcome the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty in 2014.

In conclusion, we reaffirm our willingness to cooperate with the Chair and the members of the Bureau to find a way to achieve the Commission's objectives. We hope that this new three-year cycle will

be a success in that regard. You, Mr. Chair, can count on Iraq's support.

**Mr. Bhattarai** (Nepal): First of all, I wish to congratulate you, Mr. Chair, and the other members of the Bureau and the Chairs of the Working Groups on your assumption of the Disarmament Commission's substantive session for 2015. I pledge my delegation's full cooperation in your work.

My delegation commends Ambassador Vladimir Drobnjak, Permanent Representative of Croatia, for his untiring efforts as Chair of the Commission last year, as well as the Chairs of the two Working Groups for their work during that period.

I would like to thank Ms. Angela Kane, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for her insightful presentation to the Commission the other day (see A/CN.10/PV.344). My delegation appreciates her contribution to the work of the Commission for the past several years and sees her as a continuing ally in the cause of disarmament even as she moves on from the Department. We wish her well.

Nepal associates itself with the statement delivered by the Permanent Representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (A/CN.10/PV.348).

Nepal attaches great significance to the work of the Disarmament Commission, the sole specialized deliberative body of the United Nations disarmament architecture. The Commission, with its universal membership, is a unique platform with a particular role — deliberating and making concrete recommendations on all the pertinent aspects of universal disarmament. Nepal is concerned, however, about the Commission's inability to produce any tangible outcome for more than a decade and a half. That continued failure has obviated any deterrent impact the Commission's work might otherwise have had on the various forms and manifestations of the violent use of arms, including for terrorist purposes, by non-State actors around the globe. During that time it has surrendered the opportunity to help to keep development resources away from armaments. This session marks the beginning of the Commission's new three-year cycle and gives us an opportunity to make progress. My delegation sincerely hopes that all parties will engage constructively and collectively push the cycle forward in order to make concrete contributions to the international arms-control and disarmament regime.

With its unwavering commitment to the Charter of the United Nations, and with disarmament at the core of its foreign policy, Nepal reaffirms its steadfast support to time-bound, general and complete disarmament covering all weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons. As a party to the the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Chemical Weapons Convention, and as a signatory of the Biological Weapons Convention and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, my country is concerned about the very existence of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction and their potential use or threat of use. We in Nepal believe that nuclear weapons pose the most serious threat there is to international peace and security. Given the exceptionally catastrophic consequences of such weapons for humankind, the only absolute guarantee against the use of nuclear weapons is their elimination.

Nepal reaffirms that nuclear disarmament remains its highest priority, and supports promoting complete disarmament as a matter of great urgency. With that in mind, we underscore how important it is that we start negotiations without further delay, so as to further strengthen international peace and security, implement measures aimed at ending the arms race and achieve total disarmament. We believe that dialogue and close cooperation among the First Committee, the Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament will be critical in that regard. We also support the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones as an important step in the pursuit of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

While strongly opposing the weaponization of outer space, Nepal supports its use for peaceful purposes, especially increased teleconnectivity, which can facilitate general social and educational development by helping to provide highly specialized services in areas such as health and education. Our growing dependence on space-based activities requires a collaborative effort incorporating greater transparency and increased confidence-building measures among Member States, in order to deal with threats to the safety and security of such activities.

The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons continues to threaten peace and security in many countries. Such weapons have increasingly become de facto weapons of mass destruction in terms of the casualties that are incurred in their use by unscrupulous elements. Nepal notes with concern the degree to which

the production, transfer and trading of these and other conventional weapons has increased over the years. In that regard, while we maintain that every nation has the legitimate right to acquire small arms and light weapons for self-defence, we strongly support their non-proliferation.

Nepal is hosting the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific in the belief that such regional mechanisms play an important and complementary role in promoting a global agenda for peace and disarmament. We are committed to further strengthening the Regional Centre so as to ensure that it becomes an effective United Nations entity dedicated to the promotion of peace and disarmament, including through disseminating disarmament education from the school level. We are doing our best, and we look forward to an increased level of support for the Centre from the wider membership.

I would like to conclude by once again underscoring how important and urgent it is that we emerge from the current impasse in the multilateral disarmament machinery. It is high time that we demonstrated our collective political will and strength so that the Commission can break out of its deadlock and become a viable and credible entity in the United Nations disarmament architecture. My delegation looks forward to constructive deliberations here that can also pave the way for constructive engagement during the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which starts later this month.

**Mr. Al Saad** (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): The delegation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your election to lead the Disarmament Commission. We would also like to congratulate the members of the Bureau and the Chairs of the two Working Groups on their appointment. We hope we can achieve the results that every member of the international community aspires to and wishes for in order to eliminate any possibility of a return to the atmosphere of tension in international relations that results from efforts to develop, produce or possess increasing amounts of destructive weapons. Such efforts help to worsen the security situation in many places all over the world and pose a great many risks to international peace and security.

My delegation expresses its support for and aligns itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the Group of Arab States and the Non-Aligned Movement.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia believes there are real challenges confronting international peace and security and regional stability, owing to the erosion and declining credibility of the existing international treaties and conventions. We are deeply concerned about the current international climate in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation at both the international and regional levels.

Despite the universality of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the fact that it is the cornerstone of the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime, the international multilateral efforts in that field remain inadequate and have led to a serious lack of clarity in the current political situation. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia believes very strongly that allowing the status quo to continue will make things much more difficult, because the lack of tangible progress in implementing the resolution on creating a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction could help to push States towards a nuclear arms race. That is a development that we cannot allow and that must be prevented not merely by adopting administrative and preventive measures but also by taking bold steps with strategic implications that can end the current state of tension in the region — the result of Israel's refusal to accede to the NPT — leading to the dismantling and destruction of any nuclear weapons produced outside the framework of the NPT and subjecting all nuclear facilities to the International Atomic Energy Agency's verification system, while at the same time emphasizing States' inalienable right to the use of nuclear power for peaceful purposes.

We realize that the path towards that objective will be a very difficult one, but goodwill — coupled with political will and built on an objective reading of the nature of the developments currently taking place in the Middle East, the ramifications that are likely to result from the current stalemate and their effect on international peace and security, as well as a realistic assessment of the facts on the ground — will undoubtedly encourage and motivate many States to adopt constructive positions, particularly those that possess the genuine ability to prevent such ramifications.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is very concerned about illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, and we believe that the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit

Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects is the right foundation for us to build on.

In conclusion, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia believes firmly that the will of the international community is capable of achieving fundamental solutions to all the problems blocking the path to consensus on many of the issues before the Commission.

**Mr. Pham** (Viet Nam): At the outset, Sir, on behalf of the delegation of Viet Nam, I would like to congratulate you warmly on your assumption of the chairship of the 2015 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission (UNDC). We commend the able and transparent manner in which you have steered the work of the Commission so far, and we reiterate our firm support and commitment to working closely with you for a successful outcome of the session.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/CN.10/PV.348).

In a year in which we are celebrating the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations, the multilateral disarmament agenda is as packed with major issues as ever. They include, first and foremost, the upcoming Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the need for further substantive progress in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, as well as other issues related to conventional weapons. While we should bear in mind that progress in those areas will require a greater show of political will and redoubled effort, there are grounds for optimism, given the recent accords reached in nuclear-related activities. In that context, as we embark on the first substantive session of the three-year cycle of 2015 to 2017, I would like to stress the following points that we deem crucial to the Commission's deliberations.

First, nuclear disarmament should remain the priority of the disarmament agenda, including the work of the UNDC, as agreed at the first special session on disarmament. We strongly support the proposal of the Non-Aligned Movement, made concrete in General Assembly resolution 69/58, in which the Assembly stressed the importance of calling for negotiations on a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons. It could also be beneficial to consider the need for synergy among recent notable nuclear disarmament initiatives, including that on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons. In that context, the 64-point Action Plan adopted at the 2010 NPT Review Conference should continue to be implemented in a balanced manner.

Secondly, since the 2014 substantive session laid considerable ground for progress for the Working Group on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons, it is crucial that we redouble our efforts in that area in order to create conditions conducive to a better outcome for our deliberations on every item on the agenda. In that connection, confidence-building measures in the area should assure States of their legitimate right to self-defence and therefore the right to import, maintain and produce conventional arms for legitimate defence and security needs. The creation and implementation of new mechanisms in that area should be addressed in a comprehensive, objective and non-discriminatory manner.

Thirdly, we take note of our consultations on establishing the agenda for the current triennial cycle. We are open to considering new proposals on helping to move the work of the Commission forward in accordance with its established practices and rules of procedure.

Finally, we stress that the current disarmament machinery, including the work of the Disarmament Commission, is facing growing scepticism about its credibility after years of inaction and lack of substantive progress. A number of new disarmament and arms-control processes have been tested outside the traditional machinery with some potential for achieving positive results. It is in our collective interests to create conditions that can enable this cycle of the UNDC to have a positive outcome, in contrast to that of recent years.

In conclusion, Sir, I would like to reiterate our commitment to working closely with you and other members so that, with sufficent political will and flexibility, we can arrive together at a long-awaited substantive result.

**Mr. Dehghani** (Islamic Republic of Iran): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairship of this important forum in the United Nations disarmament machinery, and to wish you every success in discharging your responsibilities. I pledge my delegation's active and constructive engagement in the work of the Commission. I would also like to congratulate Ambassador Kairat Abdrakhmanov

of Kazakhstan and Mr. Bouchaib El Oumni of Morocco for their well-deserved election as Chairs of the two Working Groups.

My delegation associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/CN.10/PV.348).

We are pleased that the Commission has commenced the first year of its new cycle with an agreed substantive agenda that includes one item on nuclear disarmament. The total elimination of nuclear weapons is definitely the highest priority on the disarmament and international security agenda. We hope that our deliberations in the Commission will contribute to upholding and strengthening the norms, principles, obligations and commitments relating to nuclear disarmament, as established in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (A/S-10/2), the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the outcome documents of the NPT Review Conferences.

We are approaching the convening of the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the international instrument that forms the foundation of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. The NPT has succeeded in constraining the spread of nuclear weapons, a remarkable accomplishment that has been made possible because non-nuclear-weapon States have kept their end of the bargain. However, we are facing a deep crisis of confidence in the credibility of the bargain that forms the basis of the NPT, because nuclear-weapon States are not honouring their part of the contract. They have made absolutely no progress towards meeting their nuclear disarmament obligations under article VI of the NPT. Words and promises have not been translated into concrete and effective actions.

If the NPT is to endure, it is essential that the nuclear-weapon States prove that they are serious about their nuclear disarmament commitments, and the time to do so is now, not when it is too late. Nuclear-weapon States should immediately take effective measures to restore confidence in their commitment to nuclear disarmament. Their mere reaffirmation of their commitment to achieving a world free of nuclear weapons is welcome but completely insufficient, and it does not equate to compliance with their nuclear disarmament obligations under the NPT. In order to comply with their nuclear disarmament obligations, nuclear-weapon States must make genuine and systematic progress in verifiably reducing and eliminating their nuclear-weapon stockpiles.

There is currently no promising indication that the nuclear-weapon States are contemplating total elimination of their nuclear weapons even in the long term. In fact, large budgets are being devoted to modernization programmes that demonstrate the determination of nuclear-weapon States to secure perpetual possession of their nuclear arsenals. That trend gives us a better understanding of why major nuclear-weapon States have taken some limited action to reduce the size of certain elements of their nuclear arsenals, which they are doing simply in order to create space and economic justification for continuing their modernization plans.

Nuclear-weapon States seem to believe that they have secured the indefinite extension of the NPT and no longer need to bother to convince non-nuclear-weapon States. Such calculations undermine the NPT's viability. Nuclear-weapon States should comply with their legal obligations under article VI of the NPT and the unequivocal commitments that have been agreed on at the NPT Review Conferences. If it is not stopped, non-compliance with nuclear disarmament obligations will gradually erode trust in the NPT. Compliance with treaties and commitments in the area of disarmament should not be subject to the creation or emergence of self-defined conditions.

The Commission, in its deliberations on ways and means to achieve nuclear disarmament, should consider the effectiveness and consequences of the step-by-step approach that has been pursued so far. Nuclear-weapon States relentlessly insist on a gradual and incremental approach to nuclear disarmament, without proposing any specific time frame or target date for the total elimination of nuclear weapons. The results of a piecemeal approach to nuclear disarmament have been disappointing and have brought us to the unfortunate circumstances we see today. Thousands of nuclear weapons still exist, and there are no clear prospects for their elimination within a specific time frame.

As a non-nuclear-weapon State, we believe that it is neither in the NPT's interest nor realistic to pin our hopes on an incremental approach, which has failed to bring about the promised results. Now it is time for a change. It is time to agree to start multilateral negotiations, with the participation of all nuclear- and non-nuclear-weapon States, on a comprehensive convention for achieving nuclear disarmament within a specific time

frame. We believe that the most effective and practical way to achieve and sustain the abolition of nuclear weapons is to negotiate a comprehensive, binding, irreversible, verifiable nuclear-weapon convention. To date, all the achievements that have been reached in eliminating whole categories of biological and chemical weapons have been made possible through this type of comprehensive approach. At the high-level meeting on nuclear disarmament held in the General Assembly in 2013, the Non-Aligned Movement's proposal for beginning negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear-weapon convention in the Conference on Disarmament gained wide support.

The lack of resolve on the part of nuclear-weapon States to systematically and progressively move towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons has impeded meaningful activity within the disarmament machinery with regard to nuclear disarmament. For the past 18 years, the Conference on Disarmament has been unable to fulfil its negotiating mandate because some nuclear-weapon States have blocked the adoption of a balanced programme of work involving the commencement of negotiations on nuclear disarmament. We call on them to adopt a balanced and constructive approach.

The establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East has been an important objective and priority for the Islamic Republic of Iran. The dangerous and violent nature and policies of the Israeli regime are well known to all. Aggression, occupation and the commission of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity are integral characteristics of this regime, which is also armed with nuclear weapons. The mere existence of nuclear weapons in Israel's hands has foiled every international and regional effort to establish the Middle East as a zone free of nuclear weapons, and it continues to pose a serious threat to the security of NPT States parties in the Middle East. Israel's refusal to abandon its nuclear weapons and accede to the NPT has increased the potential for the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East and has resulted in some States' refusal to accede to international instruments prohibiting weapons of mass destruction. Furthermore, the prospects for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East will be enhanced when certain nuclear-weapon States abandon their unconstructive policy of exempting Israel from adherence to the NPT.

Where there is a will, there is a way to overcome challenges and move towards the international community's established goals and priorities in the field of disarmament. We hope that our deliberations in the Commission will help to uphold internationally agreed norms and principles and advance our common objectives.

**Mr. Dabbashi** (Libya) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me to start, Sir, by congratulating you on your assumption of the chairmanship of this session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. I also congratulate all the other members of the Bureau on their elections and take this opportunity to express my appreciation for the efforts of Ambassador Vladimir Drobnjak, Permanent Representative of Croatia, as Chair of the previous session.

Libya endorses the statement made by the representative of Bahrain on behalf of the Arab Group and by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/CN.10/PV.348).

Libya wishes to reaffirm the importance of the role played by the Disarmament Commission as the only deliberative body specialized in the area of disarmament within the United Nations system. Nevertheless, it deplores the Commission's failure to come up with a consensus document for over a decade now as a result of the lack of political will of certain States. Libya hopes that this situation will change and that concrete progress will be made during this session.

Despite the efforts made in the area of disarmament over the last few decades, the threat of the use of nuclear weapons persists. There is no doubt that nuclear disarmament remains a priority and a legal multilateral commitment. The complete elimination of nuclear weapons is the only guarantee of their non-use or threat of use. In the meantime, Libya stresses the importance of unilateral initiatives undertaken to voluntarily renounce nuclear weapons and programmes. We hope that other countries will follow the example set by Libya, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, South Africa and Belarus.

On the other hand, the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones, especially in the Middle East, is a priority that will greatly contribute to efforts to achieve the objective of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. In that regard, Libya expresses its disappointment at the failure to convene the 2012 conference on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. We call for the

full implementation of international commitments regarding the Middle East, commitments which are set out in the Action Plan adopted at the 2010 Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference.

We have to take into account the three pillars of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, namely, nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. Libya also expresses its grave concern about the devastating humanitarian consequences resulting from any use of nuclear weapons and stresses the need for all States to comply with international law, including international humanitarian law. We also underscore the importance of resuming negotiations to conclude a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons to prohibit their possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use and to provide for their destruction through a legally binding international treaty.

Libya welcomes the adoption of resolution 58/69, entitled "Follow-up to the 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament". It calls for efforts to be stepped up to achieve universality of the Non-Proliferation Treaty in order to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons. Libya also stresses the need for the nuclear-weapon States to comply with their obligations under article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and for the results of the Review Conference of 1995, the thirteen steps adopted by the 2000 Review Conference and the Action Plan set out in the final document of the 2010 Review Conference to be implemented.

Furthermore, Libya welcomes the framework agreement reached by Iran and six other States regarding Iran's nuclear programme. In that connection, Libya reaffirms the inalienable right of States to research, produce and generate nuclear energy without any discrimination, in accordance with article IV of the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

With regard to confidence-building measures in the area of conventional weapons, I wish to reaffirm Libya's support for practical initiatives to build confidence. Libya believes that such measures will strengthen transparency and create conditions conducive to progress on disarmament, as they are a means of consolidating international peace and security.

Libya also welcomes the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty, on 24 December 2014, and hopes that trade in conventional weapons will become more disciplined and responsible. In that regard, Libya affirms the right of States to possess, manufacture, import, export and stockpile conventional weapons and their parts and components for their self-defence and security needs, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. We call for a balanced implementation of the Treaty in an objective manner that protects the interests of all States, not only those of exporting and producing States.

**Mr. El Oumni** (Morocco) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, allow me to express my sincere congratulations to you, Sir, on behalf of the Kingdom of Morocco on assuming the chairmanship of this substantive session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. We are fully confident that the Commission and this session will benefit greatly from your wisdom and your leadership. We would also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau and to express our gratitude to all the groups and delegations that have congratulated Morocco and Kazakhstan for their elections to chair the first and second Working Groups. I personally look forward to working with you, Sir, in chairing the second Working Group, concerning confidence-building measures in the area of conventional weapons. We will make every effort to ensure the success of our endeavours and to achieve consensus, or at least to achieve significant progress towards consensus.

(*spoke in English*)

The full statement of the Moroccan delegation will be submitted to the Secretariat in order to be posted online. We will just make very short remarks.

We have adopted an agenda. It does not meet our expectations, Sir, for more focused deliberations, but we will contribute to the consultations that will be conducted under your leadership in order to identify focused topics for deliberations in future. We are conscious of the fact that the Commission was able to reach agreements in the past only when it deliberated on very specific and focused issues. We all agree that without political will we cannot reach consensus, but consensus also requires efficient machinery. We all agreed on that in 1978. That is why we think that further improving the efficiency of the Commission should be among the issues subject to consultations.

Again, our full statement will be posted online and will reflect all our views on the issues under consideration. Let me just point out a few principles.

With regard to agenda item 1, we believe that the starting point for progress in nuclear disarmament is the fulfilment of existing obligations and agreements in the context of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). In that regard, we should all endeavour to ensure a successful NPT Review Conference. Reaffirming past agreements would be good, but not good enough. Bold measures are required in order to advance the objective of disarmament and preserve the credibility of the NPT and the regime it established. Our national implementation report to the Conference includes proposals and areas where such progress is needed.

The universality of the NPT is crucial to international peace and security. Adherence by Israel to the Treaty will enhance peace, security and confidence in the Middle East.

With regard to confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons, we would like to underline that such measures could play a great role in enhancing peace and security. We believe that they should be based on the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and on international law, in particular respect for the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of States.

**Mr. Rahamtalla** (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I am pleased to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chair of this substantive and important session. We are confident that your expertise and capability will ensure the success of this session. I also would like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau and the Chairs of the two Working Groups on their elections.

We align ourselves with the statements delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and by the representative of Nigeria, and by the representative of Bahrain on behalf of the Arab Group (see A/CN.10/PV.348).

We reaffirm that the delegation of the Sudan will participate very actively in the deliberations at this session. Our meeting here comes as the world awaits the holding of the conference on establishing a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, in accordance with the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Therefore, we call for that meeting to be convened as soon as possible and with the participation of all States, in accordance with the Action Plan of the Final Document of the 2010 Review Conference.

We call on the international community to make every effort to ensure the success of the conference and to produce practical results and clear implementation and follow-up mechanisms, within a specific time frame in order to make the Middle East a zone free of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction. In that context, we affirm the need to subject all nuclear facilities in the Middle East to the comprehensive safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency. That would require Israel to accede to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. We also recall that regional and international developments today, particularly in the Middle East, demonstrate that the only way to consolidate international security is to activate multilateral channels, chief among them the convening of a conference on the Middle East.

The Sudan is an active participant in international disarmament efforts. We were among the first States to accede to the relevant international conventions and instruments, such as the Non-Proliferation Treaty. We have also led efforts aimed at declaring Africa a nuclear-weapon-free zone through the Pelindaba Treaty, and we acceded to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty in 2004 after participating in the Vienna workshop on the objectives of the Treaty and the methods of work of its centres worldwide.

We would also like to mention that in 2004 our capital Khartoum hosted the first conference of national African entities responsible for the implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. The conference produced important recommendations, including a recommendation on making Africa a chemical-weapon-free zone and emphasized the need for State activities in this area to be limited to peaceful uses, without prejudice to the complete, legitimate and inalienable rights of States concerning the ability to benefit from nuclear and chemical technologies in scientific, technological and development-related uses.

The Sudan's primary concern in the area of disarmament is the issue of small arms and light weapons. Like so many countries in the world, my country suffers from this phenomenon. It has been linked in many cases to economic dimensions exacerbated by such natural phenomena as climate change, drought and desertification, which led to increased competition over water and plant resources. That, in turn, made

certain tribes resort to weapons and population groups as a way to exhibit their power.

It is therefore important to make the acquisition of these weapons very difficult. More than many other States, the Sudan realizes the dangers of that phenomenon and the need to eliminate it. Therefore, we have been present and active in all the relevant international and regional forums, in addition to our national efforts through the national office to combat the spread of small arms and light weapons. We do so based on our belief on the connection between the spread of that category of weapons and transnational organized crime, terrorism and drug trafficking.

In that regard, the Sudan is leading multifaceted efforts within the African Union, the League of Arab States and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development. Last year, the Sudan hosted a regional workshop on combating the spread of small arms and light weapons. We have also made bilateral efforts with neighbouring States to repair borders and tighten border control, customs and checkpoints.

In mentioning those efforts, we would also like emphasize that combating the spread of that category of weapon should primarily be done in the producing States, and not only in the States that are affected by the phenomenon. We underscore the need for manufacturing countries not to export these weapons to non-State actors, in order to prevent them from falling into the hands of groups and individuals without regulations in place. We underscore the need to provide all forms of support, especially to the States affected by the phenomenon, as indicated in chapter 2 of the United Nations work plan to assist them in combating the spread of small arms and light weapons.

At the national level, the Sudan has taken many steps to implement the Programme of Action on Small Arms. We have established the administrative units needed for that purpose and set up an office in the Ministry of the Interior to act as the main focal point for implementing the Programme and coordinating all related policies, plans and strategies. We have established a working group involving the relevant ministries and agencies to develop general policies and strategies and follow up on implementation processes.

Our national office on small arms and light weapons will follow a well-organized plan to be implemented over the next five years, focusing on developing and implementing national legislation in line with regional and international weapons-control instruments. The office will also issue licenses to citizens for ownership and possession of certain weapons in accordance with the law, sponsor public awareness and outreach programmes, increase border control, enhance coordination with the relevant regional and subregional entities, manage weapons arsenals and be responsible for tracking methods and certificates of origin.

We believe that the 2006 publication entitled *Economic and Social Council Ad Hoc Advisory Groups on African Countries Emerging from Conflict: The Silent Avant-Garde*, on conflict and development, clarifies the connection between the two concepts. Accordingly, when dealing with conflicts, in particular when authorizing peacekeeping missions, the Security Council should try to balance disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes in post-conflict countries with efforts to address the root causes of conflict, which are almost always related to insufficient development, that is, as the result of scarce resources, desertification and climate change.

The Darfur conflict is just one example of the convergence of such factors. The effect of the scarcity of resources on various groups makes it all the more important to favour development as the preferred way to combating the spread of small arms and light weapons. Providing capacity-building support to developing countries is essential — for merely sending experts, as has been the Security Council's recent practice, limits the efforts undertaken to tracing the effects of the phenomenon rather than dealing with the root causes.

**Mr. Sarki** (Nigeria): I have the honour to deliver this statement in my national capacity.

My delegation congratulates you, Sir, on your election as Chair of this year's session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC). While acknowledging the rich experience you are bringing to bear on these meetings, Mr. Chair, we wish to convey our constructive support for you and the Bureau as we strive to achieve the objectives of this session. We congratulate the members of the Bureau and the Chairs of the two Working Groups, and we promise to work constructively with them as well.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement by the representative of Indonesia (see A/CN.10/PV.348). We underscore at the outset the important role the UNDC

plays as the sole specialized deliberative body within the United Nations multilateral disarmament machinery.

The continued existence of nuclear weapons indubitably remains an existential threat to all humankind. Not only is their updating and maintenance costly, but they rob all nations — and the entire world — of resources that could otherwise be used for more peaceful and beneficial endeavours. Therefore, a successful 2015 session of the UNDC should provide modest but clear recommendations on the way forward towards comprehensive nuclear disarmament. Such an outcome would no doubt justify our presence and persistence here, and it would also convey the Member States' determination to make progress in the scale and pace of nuclear disarmament, which has unfortunately remained stalled and largely discouraging.

We marked the forty-fifth anniversary of the entry into force of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) a month ago and will convene its ninth Review Conference less than a month from today. Despite the many challenges to the implementation of the disarmament obligations set forth in the Treaty, the NPT has been largely successful in preventing the spread of nuclear weapons. My delegation stresses that the Treaty's universalization lies in the strict compliance with its three pillars — disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Nuclear weapons are by definition instruments of wholesale mass destruction. It has repeatedly been demonstrated that these weapons are inhumane and unacceptable and that they should be taken off the list of global armaments. Curiously, they remain the only known weapons of mass destruction yet to be prohibited. The question should then be, why do we keep such weapons? My delegation supports all the processes geared to favourably addressing this menace, be it through commencing negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty in the Conference on Disarmament or in promoting the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

The world has witnessed the pain, sorrow and misery wantonly brought on by natural disasters in many regions of the world, including the costs of recovery and rehabilitation, which sometimes run into the billions of dollars. We must therefore strive to achieve the end-goal of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and halt the spiral of descent into unnecessary chaos occasioned by an accidental or deliberate use of nuclear weapons, which would in effect be a man-made disaster.

My delegation reiterates the grave humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons and welcomes the convening of conferences in Norway, Mexico and Austria in that regard. We urge the nuclear-weapon States to consider the catastrophic consequences of nuclear explosions — specifically the mid- and longer-term implications for health, the environment, infrastructure and climate — as well as the potential irreversibility of their impact on human existence and life as we know it.

Nigeria associates itself with the Treaty of Pelindaba, which entered into force in 2009 and which acts as a shield for the continent of Africa, including by preventing the stationing of nuclear weapons and explosive devices on our continent and by prohibiting the testing of nuclear weapons in our region. In view of the fact that measures such as this can help to ensure a world free from the fear or possibility of the use of nuclear weapons, my delegation calls on all Member States to support efforts to replicate it in other parts of the world, including the Middle East.

Nigeria reaffirms its commitment to the full implementation of the three pillars of the NPT. Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation unquestionably remain the ultimate goal, but my delegation wishes to emphasize the useful role of the third pillar, the right of nations to the peaceful use of nuclear energy in their development, particularly in power generation and the health sector.

One part of our deliberations focuses on recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, while the other aspect addresses practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons. The UNDC has clearly contributed valuable guidelines and approaches in the field. While we note its role in developing those concepts, it is essential that the Commission step up momentum by showing that it has the will to translate concepts into reality. In that regard, given that the area of nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons has received major attention, it is imperative that we highlight the dangerous proliferation and use of conventional weapons as choice instruments of destabilization in many regions, not least the African continent. It is the unregulated trade in conventional weapons that has created the menace of proliferating small arms and light weapons, a deeply troubling scenario that has led to the unnecessary deaths of

innocent citizens in our region, our countries and our communities.

My delegation therefore welcomed the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), on 24 December 2014, a major milestone that is strongly supported by numerous signatories and States parties. As the first legally binding global instrument to regulate the trade in conventional arms, its universalization and faithful implementation should have a positive impact on global efforts to prevent and eradicate the illicit trade in conventional arms by preventing their diversion for unauthorized use. It should also reduce human suffering and contribute to global peace, security and stability. We are therefore hopeful that the Working Group seized with the issue of practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons will continue to highlight the ATT's many benefits and usefulness for global peace, security and development.

My delegation would like to take this opportunity to highlight the efforts of the United Nations Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament in terms of their contribution to disarmament measures and associated challenges. We welcome the valuable input of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, particularly its provision of capacity-building, technical assistance and other support to many Member States on the continent.

My delegation promises to work to fulfil the mandate of the UNDC as established and highlighted in the first special session of the United Nations devoted to disarmament. We hope that all Member States will show flexibility as we begin deliberations in the coming days.

**Mr. Boukadoum** (Algeria): At the outset, Sir, I would like to congratulate you on your election as Chair of the 2015 session of the Disarmament Commission (UNDC). We look forward to a productive and fruitful session. We would also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their election, and our appreciation goes to Ms. Angela Kane, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for her remarks (see A/CN.10/PV.344).

My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and Bahrain, on behalf of the Arab Group (see A/CN.10/PV.348). I would like to make the following additional comments.

Algeria attaches the utmost importance to general and complete disarmament as a means for ensuring international peace and security, and reiterates its commitment to multilateral diplomacy as the core principle of negotiation in the area of disarmament. We would like to emphasize how important it is that all Member States pursue multilateral negotiations in good faith, as agreed on by consensus in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (resolution A/S-10/2), in order to achieve general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international controls. In that regard, Algeria reaffirms the central role of the United Nations as a universal multilateral framework for the consideration of disarmament issues as well as the relevance and centrality of the UNDC as the sole specialized deliberative body within the United Nations multilateral disarmament machinery.

My delegation would like to underline the importance of the current session, as it marks the beginning of a new three-year cycle, and to appeal to all Member States to show the political will needed to enable the Disarmament Commission to achieve a successful and meaningful outcome for its two agenda items, "Recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons" and "Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms".

As a State party to the main treaties concerned with nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction, Algeria reaffirms that nuclear disarmament remains its highest priority and reiterates its concern about the existence of nuclear weapons and their potential use or threat of use. We also reaffirm our full confidence in and commitment to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), a unique international instrument and the cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. We would like once again to stress the need to universalize the Treaty and ensure compliance with each of its three pillars — disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. With a view to strengthening the global architecture on non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament, my delegation would also like to reiterate the importance of achieving universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, in order to enable it to enter into force.

According to the NPT, the nuclear-weapon States have the primary responsibility for achieving nuclear disarmament. Accordingly, those States should respect and fully implement their obligations under the Treaty, their commitments as outlined in the 13 practical steps adopted at the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, presided over by Algeria, and in the Action Plan adopted by consensus in 2010 at the eighth NPT Review Conference. Algeria is deeply concerned about the lack of progress in implementing those undertakings and calls on all States parties to the NPT to renew their commitments in stronger terms at the 2015 NPT Review Conference.

In the conviction that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against their use or threat of use, Algeria supports the road map proposed by NAM during the 2013 General Assembly High-level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament (see A/68/PV.11). We therefore call for effective implementation of resolution 69/58, including the urgent commencement of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament for the early conclusion of a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons to prohibit their possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use and to provide for their destruction.

Numerous States have chosen to use atomic energy for exclusively civilian applications, in accordance with article IV of the NPT. Indeed, for many developing countries nuclear energy represents a strategic choice for their economic development and energy security needs. Accordingly, we would like to express our support for the legitimate right to develop, research, produce and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes under the non-proliferation regime. As the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones is an important step towards achieving the goals of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, the entry into force, on 15 July 2009, of the Pelindaba Treaty, which established Africa as a nuclear-weapon free zone, is an important contribution in that regard.

Clearly, the example of the Pelindaba Treaty and of other nuclear-weapon-free zones should be followed in the Middle East in particular. Algeria deeply regrets that the region has still been unable to achieve that status, 20 years after the 1995 NPT Review Conference's adoption of a resolution on establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. Algeria rejects that status quo and stresses its strong commitment to implementing the 1995 resolution on the Middle East and the 2010 Review Conference action plan. And we are deeply disappointed at the postponement of the conference on establishing the Middle East as a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction.

In the area of conventional weapons, my delegation would like to stress that the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons continues to threaten peace and stability in many countries and regions, particularly North Africa and the Sahel. It constitutes a source of supply to terrorist groups and organized crime, and is therefore an ongoing concern for my country. We reaffirm that the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, along with the International Tracing Instrument, is more than ever of the utmost relevance, and we emphasize the importance of their full, balanced and effective implementation. We would also like to stress that international cooperation and assistance is essential to the implementation of those two instruments. My delegation welcomes the adoption, in June 2014, by consensus of the outcome document of the fifth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider Implementation of the Programme of Action. We would also like to take this opportunity to announce that Algeria recently ratified the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, along with its protocols I, III and IV.

Concerning the issue of confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms, Algeria wishes to underline that in efforts to contribute to the goal of international peace and security, confidence-building measures should be undertaken in full conformity with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, including that of the right of the self-determination of all peoples, taking into account the particular situation of those under colonial or other forms of alien domination or foreign occupation, and recognizing the right of peoples to take legitimate action in accordance with the Charter in order to realize their inalienable right to self-determination.

**Mr. Fernández Rivera** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election and wish you every success in leading the Disarmament Commission.

My delegation associates itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf

of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), and Ecuador, on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) (see A/CN.10/PV.348).

Nuclear disarmament, and the elimination of nuclear weapons in particular, is a priority objective for the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States. In that regard, we should recall that at CELAC's second Summit, held in Havana, the region was declared a zone of peace, affirming a long regional tradition that is enshrined in the Treaty of Tlatelolco. We urge all countries possessing nuclear weapons to retract all their reservations concerning the terms of the Treaty, respect Latin America and the Caribbean's non-nuclear status and remove from their security doctrines the possibility of the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against countries that do not possess such weapons.

In that regard, we would like to draw the Commission's attention to an executive order issued on 9 March by President Barack Obama in which he declared a national emergency for the United States based on a perceived threat to its national security posed by Venezuela. That unilateral and illegal measure constitutes a threat to Venezuela's sovereignty and territorial integrity and a flagrant violation of international law, including the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the 1970 Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the 1981 Declaration on the Inadmissibility of Intervention and Interference in the Internal Affairs of States. In that context, we should ask ourselves how the United States, whose annual military spending exceeds $690 billion, with 662 military bases in 38 countries and 5,113 nuclear warheads, can be threatened by Venezuela, a profoundly democratic and participatory developing country with no strategic weapons.

These kinds of threats to the peace and security of a member of the Latin American and Caribbean Community make it more essential than ever that we hold a high-level conference aimed at identifying measures and actions that should be taken in order to completely and irreversibly end the production, development, testing, storage and use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, in line with the conclusions of the General Assembly's first High-level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament, held on 26 September 2013 (see A/68/PV.11). Latin America and the Caribbean is a zone of peace. Our peoples took a decision to resolve the differences between our nations peacefully, through dialogue and in full conformity with international law. We invite others to do the same.

Today we, the countries of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America, the Union of South American Nations, CELAC, NAM and the Group of 77 and China, would like to thank all those here for their unwavering support to the people and Government of Venezuela and for the statements they have made condemning United States aggression and defending Venezuela's sovereignty and independence. It is important that they understand and can be sure that as a nation Venezuela is more resolute than ever and will continue to fight to eradicate poverty, exclusion and inequality and contribute to the integration, development, disarmament and peace of the peoples of the world.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to join all those Member States that have stressed the need for us to redouble our commitments and political will within the multilateral disarmament machinery. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela reiterates its full support for the Disarmament Commission and calls for efforts to be intensified to achieve a significant result that will make it possible for us to progress towards complete and irreversible nuclear disarmament.

**The Chair** (*spoke in French*): We have exhausted the list of speakers for today.

(*spoke in English*)

I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply. I would like to remind delegations that the number of interventions in exercise of the right of reply for any delegation on any item at a given meeting is limited to two. The first intervention should be limited to 10 minutes and the second to five minutes.

**Mr. Lim Sang Beom** (Republic of Korea): As part of the statement by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in this morning's meeting was addressed to my delegation, I would like to exercise my right of reply as follows.

First, the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea tries to justify its nuclear weapons programme by blaming others. Needless to say, tension in the region is rooted in North Korea's continued missile launches and nuclear tests. North Korea's argument is nothing more than an irresponsible and

absurd pretext. Let me remind the representatives in this room that, in addition to the Security Council resolution, more than 80 Member States issued national statements condemning North Korea's third nuclear test in 2013 and urging North Korea to abide by the relevant Security Council resolutions.

Secondly, the international community has repeatedly made it clear that North Korea cannot have the status of a nuclear-weapon State in any case. We advise North Korea to wake up from its delusion. Pyongyang must realize that a nuclear arsenal cannot guarantee its security.

Thirdly, as long as North Korea continues to pursue its nuclear and missile programmes, the international community's sanctions against North Korea will be maintained and strengthened. This will make North Korea's economic development more difficult by further isolating its economy, which is already considerably cut off from the international community, and make it harder for Pyongyang to attract foreign investment.

In addition, committing a huge amount of material and financial resources not to the improvement of the quality of life of North Korean people through economic development but to the development of its nuclear and missile programmes will worsen North Korea's economy by exacerbating the distorted distribution of resources. Therefore, North Korea must abandon its nuclear and missile programmes and invest in the welfare of its people.

Lastly, let me be clear that, while we have to respond to provocations firmly, we are also ready to cooperate with the North. As I said yesterday, if North Korea makes the right choices, we are prepared to cooperate together with the international community to fully help North Korea to participate in the global economy and develop peacefully. We hope once again that North Korea moves in this direction.

**Mr. An Myong Hun** (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I have to respond to the intervention made by the South Korean representative.

I do not know whether he does not have knowledge of nuclear issues, knowledge of the history of nuclear issues on the Korean peninsula or whether he intends to not know the history of nuclear issues on the Korean peninsula. As the international community knows, including South Korea, we once acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), but we were forced to withdraw from it because of political and military manipulations by the United States to misuse the NPT as a means to do something against my country. That is why we were compelled to withdraw from the NPT and compelled to possess nuclear weapons as deterrent to the nuclear threat of the United States. This is what happened.

Through all these processes regarding nuclear issues, we were also compelled to increase this nuclear deterrent in order to safeguard peace and security on the Korean peninsula. Nuclear tests are just one part of this ongoing process. They are just one part of the whole historical story. If the South Korean representative wants to mention something, he has to start from the beginning. Our nuclear deterrent is to defend our nation, to safeguard our peace and security.

I want to say to South Korea that, as I said yesterday, there is nothing uncomfortable for South Korea with regard to our nuclear deterrent unless they obey the policy of its super-Power in a humiliating manner. And as I also said yesterday, we came to possess nuclear weapons not because we wanted it, but because external conditions compelled us to do so. We possessed it not to be recognized as something extra; we just possessed it to defend ourselves.

We never ask countries to recognize us as something extraordinary. If South Korea is really a full-fledged sovereign entity and has its own spirit, it does not need to be worried about that. Perhaps they could feel at ease with this nuclear development because it will also defend the whole Korean nation, the peace and stability on the Korean peninsula. As long as the negative and hostile policy of the United States continues, which is the case, we cannot give it up. I hope this point is very clear to the South Korean representative.

**Mr. Iliichev** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): To be honest, we have stopped being surprised when the Georgian and Ukrainian delegations repeatedly take every opportunity at the United Nations for their furious rhetoric, for the insinuations and discussion of issues that are not on the agenda. Without getting into an argument, however, allow me to make a number of comments regarding the status of nuclear facilities in Crimea.

First, since 18 March 2014, the agreement dated 28 February 1985, which was concluded between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has been in force, including the Additional Protocol to it dated

22 March 2000, and now covers the whole territory of the Republic of Crimea and the city of Sebastopol and subjects of the Russian Federation. Russia, acting in a spirit of openness and cooperation, informed the secretariat of the IAEA regarding the status of nuclear facilities in the Republic of Crimea and Sebastopol, and included them on its list of peaceful facilities subject to IAEA safeguards, in accordance with the Safeguards Agreement between us and the Agency. In such a way, the situation is fully in keeping with international legality.

Secondly, in accordance with the free and voluntarily expressed will of the population of Crimea on joining the Russian Federation, during the pan-Crimean referendum of 16 March 2014, which was in keeping with the principle of self-determination of peoples enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, as well as in accordance with a treaty on the accession of the Republic of Crimea to the Russian Federation dated 18 March 2014, the territorial Republic of Crimea and the city of Sebastopol now fall under the jurisdiction of the Russian Federation.

Thus, Russia took upon itself full responsibility for nuclear facilities in its new subjects. Furthermore, the Russian Federation expressed its readiness to provide the Agency, should it be interested in this, with an opportunity to conduct a full-fledged verification visit that primary or special material that was being used in these facilities was not removed except in cases provided for in the aforementioned agreement between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the IAEA dated 21 February 1985.

Concerning the claim that Russia, allegedly, in its actions, demonstrated the lack of viability of the very concept of negative security assurances for non-nuclear States, and thus undermines the nuclear non-proliferation regime, it should be underscored that the common element of the Budapest Memorandum and the concept of negative assurances in its classical interpretation is limited to the obligation not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear States. That obligation, which Russia holds with regard to Ukraine, was not violated in any way. All other commitments under the Budapest Memorandum mirror the principles of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and bear no relation to the concept of negative assurances and the NPT agreement as a whole. Therefore, any claims that Russia's actions undermine the nuclear non-proliferation regime are baseless and made in bad faith.

*The meeting rose at 5.35 p.m.*